United Nations A/RES/63/90

General Assembly

Distr.: General
18 December 2008

Sixty-third session
Agenda item 28

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[*on the report of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) (A/63/399)*]

63/90. International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 51/122 of 13 December 1996, 54/68 of 6 December 1999, 59/2 of 20 October 2004, 61/110 and 61/111 of 14 December 2006, 62/101 of 17 December 2007 and 62/217 of 22 December 2007,

Deeply convinced of the common interest of mankind in promoting and expanding the exploration and use of outer space, as the province of all mankind, for peaceful purposes and in continuing efforts to extend to all States the benefits derived therefrom, and also of the importance of international cooperation in this field, for which the United Nations should continue to provide a focal point,

Reaffirming the importance of international cooperation in developing the rule of law, including the relevant norms of space law and their important role in international cooperation for the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes, and of the widest possible adherence to international treaties that promote the peaceful uses of outer space in order to meet emerging new challenges, especially for developing countries,

Seriously concerned about the possibility of an arms race in outer space, and bearing in mind the importance of article IV of the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies[1] (Outer Space Treaty),

Recognizing that all States, in particular those with major space capabilities, should contribute actively to the goal of preventing an arms race in outer space as an essential condition for the promotion and strengthening of international cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes,

Considering that space debris is an issue of concern to all nations,

Noting the progress achieved in the further development of peaceful space exploration and applications as well as in various national and cooperative space

[1] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 610, No. 8843.

projects, which contributes to international cooperation, and the importance of further developing the legal framework to strengthen international cooperation in this field,

Convinced of the importance of the recommendations in the resolution entitled "The Space Millennium: Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development", adopted by the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III), held at Vienna from 19 to 30 July 1999,[2] and the need to promote the use of space technology towards implementing the United Nations Millennium Declaration,[3]

Seriously concerned about the devastating impact of disasters,[4]

Desirous of enhancing international coordination and cooperation at the global level in disaster management and emergency response through greater access to and use of space-based services for all countries and facilitating capacity-building and institutional strengthening for disaster management, in particular in developing countries,

Deeply convinced that the use of space science and technology and their applications in such areas as telemedicine, tele-education, disaster management, environmental protection and other Earth observation applications contribute to achieving the objectives of the global conferences of the United Nations that address various aspects of economic, social and cultural development, particularly poverty eradication,

Taking note, in that regard, of the fact that the 2005 World Summit recognized the important role that science and technology play in promoting sustainable development,[5]

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space on the work of its fifty-first session,[6]

1. *Endorses* the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space on the work of its fifty-first session;[6]

2. *Urges* States that have not yet become parties to the international treaties governing the uses of outer space[7] to give consideration to ratifying or acceding to those treaties in accordance with their domestic law, as well as incorporating them in their national legislation;

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[2] See *Report of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, Vienna, 19–30 July 1999* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.00.I.3), chap. I, resolution 1.

[3] See resolution 55/2.

[4] The term "disasters" refers to natural or technological disasters.

[5] See resolution 60/1, para. 60.

[6] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-third Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/63/20).

[7] Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies (United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 610, No. 8843); Agreement on the Rescue of Astronauts, the Return of Astronauts and the Return of Objects Launched into Outer Space (United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 672, No. 9574); Convention on International Liability for Damage Caused by Space Objects (United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 961, No. 13810); Convention on Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space (United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1023, No. 15020); and Agreement Governing the Activities of States on the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies (United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1363, No. 23002).

3. *Notes* that, at its forty-seventh session, the Legal Subcommittee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space continued its work,[8] as mandated by the General Assembly in its resolution 62/217;

4. *Endorses* the recommendation of the Committee[9] that the Legal Subcommittee, at its forty-eighth session, taking into account the concerns of all countries, in particular those of developing countries:

(*a*) Consider the following as regular agenda items:

(i) General exchange of views;

(ii) Status and application of the five United Nations treaties on outer space;

(iii) Information on the activities of international intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations relating to space law;

(iv) Matters relating to:

a. The definition and delimitation of outer space;

b. The character and utilization of the geostationary orbit, including consideration of ways and means to ensure the rational and equitable use of the geostationary orbit without prejudice to the role of the International Telecommunication Union;

(*b*) Consider the following single issues/items for discussion:

(i) Review and possible revision of the Principles Relevant to the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space;[10]

(ii) Examination and review of the developments concerning the draft protocol on matters specific to space assets to the Convention on International Interests in Mobile Equipment;

(iii) Capacity-building in space law;

(iv) General exchange of information on national mechanisms relating to space debris mitigation measures;

(*c*) Consider the general exchange of information on national legislation relevant to the peaceful exploration and use of outer space in accordance with the workplan adopted by the Committee;

5. *Notes* that the Legal Subcommittee, at its forty-eighth session, will submit its proposals to the Committee for new items to be considered by the Subcommittee at its forty-ninth session, in 2010;

6. *Also notes* that, in the context of paragraph 4 (*a*) (ii) above, the Legal Subcommittee, at its forty-eighth session, will reconvene its Working Group on the Status and Application of the Five United Nations Treaties on Outer Space;

7. *Further notes* that, in the context of paragraph 4 (*a*) (iv) a. above, the Legal Subcommittee will reconvene its Working Group on Matters Relating to the Definition and Delimitation of Outer Space;

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[8] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-third Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/63/20), chap. II.D.

[9] Ibid., paras. 219–225.

[10] See resolution 47/68.

8. *Notes* that, in the context of paragraph 4 (*c*) above, the Legal Subcommittee will establish a working group to consider this item in accordance with the multi-year workplan agreed by the Subcommittee at its forty-sixth session and endorsed by the Committee at its fiftieth session;[11]

9. *Also notes* that the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, at its forty-fifth session, continued its work[12] as mandated by the General Assembly in its resolution 62/217;

10. *Endorses* the recommendation of the Committee[13] that the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, at its forty-sixth session, taking into account the concerns of all countries, in particular those of developing countries:

(*a*) Consider the following items:

(i) General exchange of views and introduction to reports submitted on national activities;

(ii) United Nations Programme on Space Applications;

(iii) Implementation of the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III);

(iv) Matters relating to remote sensing of the Earth by satellite, including applications for developing countries and monitoring of the Earth's environment;

(v) Space debris;

(vi) Space-system-based disaster management support;

(vii) Recent developments in global navigation satellite systems;

(*b*) Consider the following items in accordance with the workplans adopted by the Committee:[14]

(i) Use of nuclear power sources in outer space;

(ii) Near-Earth objects;

(*c*) Consider the following single issues/items for discussion:

(i) Examination of the physical nature and technical attributes of the geostationary orbit and its utilization and applications, including in the field of space communications, as well as other questions relating to developments in space communications, taking particular account of the needs and interests of developing countries;

(ii) International Heliophysical Year 2007;

11. *Notes* that the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, at its forty-sixth session, will submit its proposal to the Committee for a draft provisional agenda for the forty-seventh session of the Subcommittee, in 2010;

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[11] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-second Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/62/20), para. 219; and A/AC.105/891, para. 136.

[12] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-third Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/63/20), chap. II.C.

[13] Ibid., paras. 163–166.

[14] See A/AC.105/890, annex II, para. 7, for item (i) and A/AC.105/911, annex III, para. 11, for item (ii).

12. *Endorses* the agreement of the Committee, at its fifty-first session, that the topic for the 2009 symposium, to be organized by the International Astronautical Federation, would be "The role of Earth observation satellites in promoting understanding of and addressing climate change concerns" and that the symposium should be held during the first week of the forty-sixth session of the Subcommittee;[15]

13. *Agrees* that, in the context of paragraphs 10 (*a*) (ii), (iii), (vi) and 11 above, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, at its forty-sixth session, should reconvene the Working Group of the Whole;

14. *Also agrees* that, in the context of paragraph 10 (*b*) (i) above, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, at its forty-sixth session, should reconvene its Working Group on the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space and that the Working Group should continue its work on the topics described in the multi-year workplan as agreed by the Subcommittee at its forty-fourth session and the Committee at its fiftieth session;[16]

15. *Further agrees* that, in the context of paragraph 10 (*b*) (ii) above, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, at its forty-sixth session, should reconvene its Working Group on Near-Earth Objects, in accordance with the workplan under this item;[17]

16. *Endorses* the United Nations Programme on Space Applications for 2009, as proposed to the Committee by the Expert on Space Applications and endorsed by the Committee;[18]

17. *Recognizes* that, in accordance with paragraph 30 of its resolution 50/27 of 6 December 1995, the African regional centres for space science and technology education, in the French language and in the English language, located in Morocco and Nigeria, respectively, as well as the Centre for Space Science and Technology Education in Asia and the Pacific and the Regional Centre for Space Science and Technology Education for Latin America and the Caribbean, entered into an affiliation agreement with the Office for Outer Space Affairs of the Secretariat and have continued their education programmes in 2008;

18. *Agrees* that the regional centres referred to in paragraph 17 above should continue to report to the Committee on their activities on an annual basis;

19. *Notes with satisfaction* the contribution being made by the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the efforts of Member States and the Office for Outer Space Affairs to promote and support the activities being organized within the framework of the International Heliophysical Year 2007;

20. *Recognizes* that the second African Leadership Conference on Space Science and Technology for Sustainable Development was held in Pretoria from 2 to 5 October 2007, with a focus on capacity-building, knowledge-sharing and the joint participation of African countries in mutually beneficial projects in the area of space

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[15] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-third Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/63/20), para. 164; and A/AC.105/911, annex I, para. 28.

[16] See A/AC.105/890, annex II, para. 7; and *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-second Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/62/20), para. 133.

[17] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-third Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/63/20), para. 153; and A/AC.105/911, annex III, para. 11.

[18] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-third Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/63/20), paras. 71 and 77; and A/AC.105/900, paras. 2–8, and annex III.

science and technology for sustainable development, and that the third African Leadership Conference will be held in Algeria in 2009;

21. *Also recognizes* the preparations being undertaken for the Sixth Space Conference of the Americas, and that in this regard the pro tempore secretariat of the Fifth Space Conference of the Americas, established by the Government of Ecuador, organized a meeting in Quito, on 13 and 14 December 2007, with representatives of the Governments of Colombia, Ecuador and Guatemala, the International Group of Experts of the Space Conferences of the Americas and the Office for Outer Space Affairs, which resulted a set of recommendations for the preparation of the Sixth Conference, and that a second meeting with representatives of the pro tempore secretariat, the International Group of Experts and the Office for Outer Space Affairs was held in the Galapagos Islands, Ecuador, on 28 and 29 August 2008, following a regional seminar on space law, held in Quito on 26 and 27 August 2008;

22. *Further recognizes* the important role played by these conferences and other initiatives in building regional and international partnerships among States, such as the International Air and Space Fair, held in Santiago from 31 March to 6 April 2008, during which a conference was organized on space technology and climate change in relation to achieving the Millennium Development Goals, and the ongoing preparations for the fifteenth session of the Asia-Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum, to be held in Hanoi and Ha Long Bay, Viet Nam, from 10 to 12 December 2008;

23. *Welcomes* the collaboration between the Government of Thailand, the Office for Outer Space Affairs, the European Space Agency and the Asian Society of International Law, in organizing the United Nations workshop on space law, to be held in Bangkok in 2009, on the theme "Activities of States in outer space in the light of new developments: meeting international responsibilities and establishing national legal and policy frameworks", which will serve as a forum for representatives, experts and other stakeholders from various countries to share expertise and experiences in space law;

24. *Emphasizes* that regional and interregional cooperation in the field of space activities is essential to strengthen the peaceful uses of outer space, assist States in the development of their space capabilities and contribute to the achievement of the goals of the United Nations Millennium Declaration;[3]

25. *Notes with appreciation* that some States are already implementing space debris mitigation measures on a voluntary basis, through national mechanisms and consistent with the Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines of the Inter-Agency Space Debris Coordination Committee and with the Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space,[19] endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 62/217;

26. *Invites* other Member States to implement, through relevant national mechanisms, the Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space;[19]

27. *Considers* that it is essential that Member States pay more attention to the problem of collisions of space objects, including those with nuclear power sources, with space debris, and other aspects of space debris, calls for the

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[19] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-second Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/62/20), paras. 117 and 118, and annex.

continuation of national research on this question, for the development of improved technology for the monitoring of space debris and for the compilation and dissemination of data on space debris, also considers that, to the extent possible, information thereon should be provided to the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, and agrees that international cooperation is needed to expand appropriate and affordable strategies to minimize the impact of space debris on future space missions;

28. *Urges* all States, in particular those with major space capabilities, to contribute actively to the goal of preventing an arms race in outer space as an essential condition for the promotion of international cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes;

29. *Emphasizes* the need to increase the benefits of space technology and its applications and to contribute to an orderly growth of space activities favourable to sustained economic growth and sustainable development in all countries, including mitigation of the consequences of disasters, in particular in the developing countries;

30. *Notes* that space science and technology and their applications could make important contributions to economic, social and cultural development and welfare, as indicated in the resolution entitled "The Space Millennium: Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development",[2] its resolution 59/2 of 20 October 2004 and the Plan of Action of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space on the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III;[20]

31. *Notes with appreciation* that a number of the recommendations, as set out in the Plan of Action on the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III,[20] have been implemented and that satisfactory progress is being made in implementing the outstanding recommendations;

32. *Reiterates* that the benefits of space technology and its applications should continue to be brought to the attention, in particular, of the major United Nations conferences and summits for economic, social and cultural development and related fields and that the use of space technology should be promoted towards achieving the objectives of those conferences and summits and for implementing the United Nations Millennium Declaration;

33. *Notes with satisfaction* that the panel on space applications and food security, comprising the Chairman of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and representatives of the Division for Sustainable Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, held a discussion at United Nations Headquarters on 13 October 2008;

34. *Welcomes* the increased efforts to strengthen further the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities as the central United Nations mechanism for building partnerships and coordinating space-related activities within the framework of the ongoing reforms in the United Nations system to work in unison and deliver as one, and encourages entities of the United Nations system to participate fully in the work of the Inter-Agency Meeting;

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[20] See A/59/174, sect. VI.B.

35. *Urges* entities of the United Nations system, particularly those participating in the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities, to continue to examine, in cooperation with the Committee, how space science and technology and their applications could contribute to implementing the United Nations Millennium Declaration on the development agenda, particularly in the areas relating to, inter alia, food security and increasing opportunities for education;

36. *Invites* the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities to continue to contribute to the work of the Committee and to report to the Committee on the work conducted at its annual sessions;

37. *Notes with satisfaction* that the open informal meetings, held in conjunction with the annual sessions of the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities and in which representatives of member States and observers in the Committee participate, provide a constructive mechanism for an active dialogue between the entities of the United Nations system and member States and observers in the Committee;

38. *Encourages* the United Nations University and other scientific institutions to explore the possibilities of providing training and policy research at the crossroads of international law, climate change and outer space;

39. *Notes with satisfaction* the progress made within the framework of the United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response (UN-SPIDER) in the implementation of the platform programme for the period 2007–2009,[21] including inaugurating and making fully operational the UN-SPIDER office in Bonn, Germany;

40. *Notes* that, in accordance with paragraph 11 of its resolution 61/110, the UN-SPIDER programme should work closely with regional and national centres of expertise in the use of space technology in disaster management to form a network of regional support offices for implementing the activities of the programme in their respective regions in a coordinated manner, and agrees with the guidelines proposed by the Committee for selecting and setting up the proposed UN-SPIDER regional support offices;[22]

41. *Requests* the Committee to continue to consider, as a matter of priority, ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session, and agrees that during its consideration of the matter the Committee could continue to consider ways to promote regional and interregional cooperation based on experiences stemming from the Space Conferences of the Americas, the African Leadership Conferences on Space Science and Technology for Sustainable Development and the role space technology could play in the implementation of recommendations of the World Summit on Sustainable Development;

42. *Notes with satisfaction* that the Committee established a closer link between its work to implement the recommendations of UNISPACE III and the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development by contributing to the thematic areas that are addressed by the Commission,[23] and agrees that the Director

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[21] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-second Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/62/20), para. 144.

[22] Ibid., *Sixty-third Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/63/20), para. 129.

[23] See A/AC.105/872 and A/AC.105/892.

of the Division for Sustainable Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs should continue to be invited to participate in the sessions of the Committee to inform it how it could best contribute to the work of the Commission and that the Director of the Office for Outer Space Affairs should continue to participate in the sessions of the Commission to raise awareness and promote the benefits of space science and technology for sustainable development;

43. *Notes with appreciation* that the International Committee on Global Navigation Satellite Systems was established on a voluntary basis as a forum to promote cooperation, as appropriate, on matters of mutual interest to its members related to civil satellite-based positioning, navigation, timing and value-added services, as well as cooperation on the compatibility and interoperability of global navigation satellite systems, and to promote their use to support sustainable development, particularly in developing countries; that it held its first meeting in Vienna on 1 and 2 November 2006 and its second meeting in Bangalore, India, from 4 to 7 September 2007; that it will hold its third meeting in Pasadena, United States of America, from 8 to 12 December 2008; and that its fourth meeting will be held in the Russian Federation in 2009;

44. *Notes* the fact that the Office for Outer Space Affairs could integrate into its programme of work a number of actions identified for implementation by the Office contained in the Plan of Action of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space for the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III[24] and that some of those actions could be integrated into its programme of work only if additional staff and financial resources were to be provided;[25]

45. *Urges* all Member States to contribute to the Trust Fund for the United Nations Programme on Space Applications to enhance the capacity of the Office for Outer Space Affairs to provide technical and legal advisory services and initiate pilot projects in accordance with the Plan of Action of the Committee, while maintaining the priority thematic areas agreed by the Committee;

46. *Agrees* that the Committee should continue to consider a report on the activities of the International Satellite System for Search and Rescue as a part of its consideration of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications under the agenda item entitled "Report of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee", and invites Member States to report on their activities regarding the system;

47. *Requests* the Committee to continue to consider, at its fifty-second session, its agenda item entitled "Spin-off benefits of space technology: review of current status";

48. *Also requests* the Committee, in view of the importance of space and education, to continue to consider, at its fifty-second session, under its agenda item entitled "Space and society", the special theme for the focus of discussions "Space and education", in accordance with the workplan adopted by the Committee;[26]

49. *Agrees* that the Committee should continue to consider, at its fifty-second session, its agenda item entitled "Space and water";

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[24] See A/AC.105/L.262.

[25] Ibid., annex, para. 6.

[26] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/58/20), para. 239; and ibid., *Sixty-third Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/63/20), paras. 235 and 255.

50. *Also agrees* that the Committee should continue to consider, at its fifty-second session, its agenda item entitled "International cooperation in promoting the use of space-derived geospatial data for sustainable development", in accordance with the multi-year workplan adopted by the Committee;[27]

51. *Further agrees* that two new items entitled "Space and climate change" and "Use of space technology in the United Nations system" should be included in the agenda of the Committee at its fifty-second session;

52. *Agrees* that the Committee should continue to consider, at its fifty-second session, under its agenda item entitled "Other matters", the issue of its future role and activities;

53. *Notes* that in accordance with the agreement reached by the Committee at its forty-sixth session on the measures relating to the future composition of the bureaux of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies,[28] on the basis of the measures relating to the working methods of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies,[29] the Group of Asian States, the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States and the Group of Western European and Other States have nominated their candidates for the offices of Chair of the Legal Subcommittee, Second Vice-Chairman/Rapporteur of the Committee and Chair of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, respectively, for the period 2010–2011;[30]

54. *Urges* the Group of African States and the Group of Eastern European States to nominate their candidates for the office of First Vice Chair of the Committee and Chair of the Committee, respectively, for the period 2010–2011;

55. *Endorses* the decision of the Committee to grant permanent observer status to the European Organisation for Astronomical Research in the Southern Hemisphere, the European Telecommunications Satellite Organization, the International Institute of Space Law, the Prince Sultan Bin Abdulaziz International Prize for Water and the Secure World Foundation;[31]

56. *Notes* that each of the regional groups has the responsibility for actively promoting the participation in the work of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies of the member States of the Committee that are also members of the respective regional groups, and agrees that the regional groups should consider this Committee-related matter among their members;

57. *Requests* entities of the United Nations system and other international organizations to continue and, where appropriate, to enhance their cooperation with the Committee and to provide it with reports on the issues dealt with in the work of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies.

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[27] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-first Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/61/20), paras. 301–303; and ibid., *Sixty-third Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/63/20), paras. 266 and 277.

[28] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/58/20), annex II, paras. 4–9.

[29] Ibid., *Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/52/20), annex I; and ibid., *Fifty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/58/20), annex II, appendix III.

[30] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-third Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/63/20), paras. 283–285.

[31] Ibid., paras. 308 and 309.